



PRESS RELEASE



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES OF AFRICA

JULY 2022



Paris 2024, two years to go!



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With exactly two years to go before the opening of the Games of the 33rd Olympiad in Paris, ANOCA President Mustapha Berraf addressed a special message to African Olympic and Sports Movement officials and athletes of the Continent. Following is the message in its entirety.



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My dear brothers and sisters, this day, 26 July 2022, marks two years prior to the effective kick-off to the 33rd Summer Olympic Games billed for Paris, capital city of France, homeland of our own Baron Pierre De Coubertin, founder of the Olympic Games of the modern era. This is quite a symbol, especially when we consider the historical ties between this country and Africa. The world's youth, and more particularly African athletes, are now bracing for the exciting and decisive moments that come with this multi-sport event. Preparations for Paris 2024, led by our friend Tony Estanguet, suggest that the various stakeholders involved in the organisation are keen on





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making these games a spectacular sporting success. The organising committee also addressed officials of the 54 African NOCs during the General Assembly on 21 May 2022. The aim was not only to gauge the level of preparedness two years to the come together, but also to outline practical participation modalities. During the presentation, it was noted that the event will be held from 26 July to 11 August 2024 and will bring together 10,500 athletes, 28 sports + 04 and 48 disciplines for 329 events.

Our athletes are already in the starting blocks for the beginning of these games, which will keep the French capital and the public around the world on tenterhooks throughout their duration. Paris, which is eager to welcome the world's young athletes after the 1900 edition, will also play host to thousands of Africans including athletes, technical and administrative supervisors, supporters, etc...

It should not be lost on us that the Olympic Games are a great gathering which is much more than just a race for medals. It is also about fostering the Olympic values of ethics, fair play, respect for the opponent, a healthy lifestyle and modesty.

Africa's participation in these Games will therefore be multidimensional. Beyond the tracks and pitches where I hope our athletes will do better than in Tokyo, our continent must also showcase to the world all its dynamism and rich cultural diversity. In Paris, art and sport will interact and blend, in keeping with one of the very foundations of Olympism. We must be seen and heard, we must make Paris 2024 a communication tool that allows us to highlight our uniqueness in this global village.





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To you, administrators of the African Olympic and Sports Movement,

When we returned from Tokyo 2020 in 2021, we were happy with our medals, 37 in all, 11 of them in gold; we were satisfied with our performances although they were below our expectations. Africa must do better in Paris. Sports federations, National Olympic Committees and Governments must learn from the achievements of the best by researching, analysing and even dissecting the secret behind these successes. It is our bounden duty to guide our youth well if we want to do better than in Japan. Such guidance must be predicated on healthy practices that do our continent proud.

We must prepare ourselves more seriously for this major event. A prestigious global event like the Olympic Games cannot succeed without a multidimensional and rigorously coordinated preparation. We must start thinking immediately about the 2024 Olympics where this has not yet been done; let us stop this method whereby some countries only start preparing during the year of the Games; this way of doing things cannot produce convincing results. It is the entire Olympic cycle of 4 years that must be prepared thoroughly and in advance. Every little thing must be planned: the targeted athletes, their possibilities, coaching and supervision, the means necessary for them to perform, follow up and guidance of these athletes in the right path, funding these preparation campaigns... All these issues must be addressed now because the hierarchy of nations reminds us every four years that the medal rankings are not a matter of chance. It is our clarion call to Governments, NOCs and national sports federations, who must all contribute to this. ANOCA for its part has already set up a Commission in charge of administrative





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and financial support for African athletes ahead of this event. This support will be provided throughout the qualification phases, the preparations and the Games proper. Emphasis must, of course, be placed first and foremost on qualification. It is understood that qualifiers will overlap with the preparation periods. Governments, municipalities and all stakeholders must also do their part in supporting preparations for the games. This is a necessary condition for success.

Africa's presence in Paris must be remarkable. To do this, we must now expedite preparations for a befitting participation. This entails taking into account administrative, medical, nutritional, psychological and athletics data. Henceforth, we must all bear in mind that good performances by our athletes warrant a suitable preparation strategy. Governments, NOCs, national sports federations...in short, all sport stakeholders must, in synergy, now be mobilised to support the athletes and teams involved in the qualifiers and various preparation programmes.

To you, dear athletes,

I see this flame glowing in you, this dream of every sportsman and woman, the dream to participate one day in the Olympic Games and shine. You will have the opportunity to do so in exactly two years. Always keep in mind that our job as sports leaders is to create enabling conditions for you to follow your dream and to reach your full potential on the appointed day. In a few months' time, at this great world sport jamboree, all of Africa will look up to you, to support you and urge you on to success; we will stand with you as you live that unique experience to take part in an event that brings together people from across the world in peace and friendship, where





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Olympic values offer themselves to men and women of goodwill. You are bound to comply with the great principles of Olympism during this event and all through your career. Only then will you be called «great sportsmen and women», because talent alone does not suffice; behaviour on and off the tracks and pitches is also an element to be considered in grooming a great champion. Yet as you are well aware, it is still a long road to Paris; you have to pass through the qualification phase, a completely different ballgame that will warrant you to stretch your arm beyond the bone, but with dignity.

With two years to go before Paris 2024, I am once again launching a fervent appeal to all continental NOC Presidents to make judicious use Olympic Solidarity funds made available to them. I thus urge them to propose more varied projects that should have a real, lasting and positive impact on African youth. We should remember that every bit of support is essential to provide athletes with the resources they need for their development and especially for their preparation for major international events such as the forthcoming Paris 2024 event.

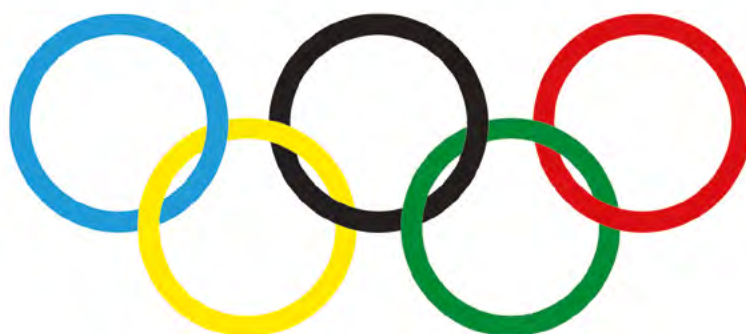
It will be our continent's success if we make it a collective challenge. Together, we are stronger!

***Mustapha Berraf,
IOC Member,
President of ANOCA***





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